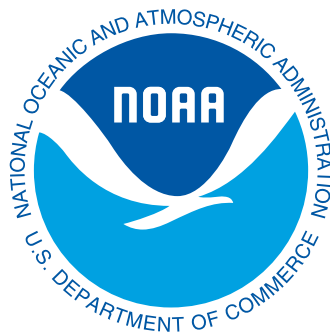


National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Program Review Report to
Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., USN (Retired)
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere /
NOAA Administrator



NOAA Core Values

People | Integrity | Excellence | Teamwork | Ingenuity
Science, Service, and Stewardship

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Since our inception almost 32 years ago (the result of a bipartisan effort of the “Stratton Commission,” the Congress and the Nixon Administration), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, commonly known as NOAA, has become an integral part of the American people’s lives and the nation’s economy. NOAA stands out among the world’s environmental agencies for its interdisciplinary focus on the oceans, the atmosphere, and earth science.

As the men and women of NOAA enter the 21st century, they have pride in an agency that is at the leading edge of the issues Americans care about. We have marshaled the cumulative talents of our employees, our technology and our many partnerships to provide science, service and stewardship for the environmental issues that affect real people and communities in the United States and throughout the World. Partnerships—with academia, with the private sector, with state and local governments—are at the core of how NOAA carries out its various missions. Among the science, service, and stewardship that NOAA and our partners provide are the following:

- Weather and flood forecasts and warnings to save lives and protect property;
- Climate and global change research, measurements and predictions;
- The Nation’s most important constellation of earth observing satellites, from 24 hour a day environmental measurements to search and rescue warnings;
- Management of fisheries and coastal resources, and protection of marine mammals, protected species and marine sanctuaries;
- Measurement of currents and tides, beach erosion and provision of coastal services;
- Exploration of the ocean;
- Safe navigation and transportation services; and,
- Products that are essential to economic growth and the Nation’s homeland security.

We cannot rest on our past achievements. Change is increasingly rapid in today’s technology-driven society and economy. It is imperative that NOAA remain focused on customer service and improving products. The NOAA website, for example, was re-engineered as a communication tool to get products and educational materials to the public and is widely acknowledged as one of the best in government. NOAA must look not only at what is immediately before it, but also forward to where it wants to be as an Agency in five years, ten years and beyond.

Over the past three decades, our missions have evolved, but our organizational structure has remained remarkably the same. The NOAA workforce has declined by 8 percent over the past ten years and remains below the level when the Agency was created. In the same decade, NOAA mandates have continued to grow and the Agency’s budget has increased by \$790.6 million and 45 percent (in 1992 constant dollars).

The new NOAA Administrator, Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., USN (Ret.), called for a bottom-up, fundamental “NOAA Program Review” to examine the Agency’s strengths and opportunities for improvement. In February 2002, the Administrator gave all NOAA employees an opportunity to suggest organizational, resource and business process changes. From February through April, a group of sixteen NOAA Executives representing each line and staff office, supported by an outstanding staff of executive leadership candidates and a contract facilitator, reviewed and debated issues brought forward by employ-

ees. The Program Review Team (PRT) members brought to this task an average of over seventeen years of work experience at NOAA and eight years experience in other government agencies, academia and the private sector. The PRT members addressed programmatic themes and employee suggestions. The PRT also put forward suggestions for building a better NOAA, one more closely aligned with its present missions and well positioned to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

This report presents a vision for NOAA's future missions that draws on the Agency's core strengths in observations, prediction and stewardship to tackle the inherently complex problems of tomorrow. This is a challenge to which NOAA is uniquely placed to respond, but one that requires a close look at our present business practices, organization and management processes. Achieving our goals will require that we overcome our "stove-piped" structure, increase teamwork and develop cohesive, cross-NOAA programs that contribute to a "corporate" NOAA. The PRT recommends organizational changes that include line-office realignment over the next several years, comprehensive planning, programming and budgeting processes linked to a "rolling horizon" strategic plan, and a NOAA-wide requirements process to assure that new and existing programs are fully reviewed and properly executed.

The PRT examined a number of areas where NOAA can improve program support for our employees and constituents—from facilities, grants and requirements; to education and outreach; to alignment of laboratories; to planning and acquiring environmental observing systems. The PRT recommends both immediate and long-term changes to build a more effective, efficient, and unified NOAA. A recent NOAA-wide employee survey noted that while 68 percent of employees were confident in NOAA's future, only 44 percent of respondents believe that NOAA has an effective organizational structure. Only 32 percent of respondents believed that upper management of NOAA line and staff offices do a good job at making employees feel a part of NOAA corporate culture.

Employee input and PRT discussions consistently indicated that NOAA's greatest need for improvement is in building a stronger corporate NOAA. It is imperative that NOAA components work together as an integrated team. In order to maintain and improve our role as the Nation's pre-eminent environmental science, service and stewardship agency, we must now operate in the same interrelated and linked manner as the environment we observe and forecast.



Scott B. Gudes
Deputy Under Secretary, NOAA
Chair, Program Review Team
May 22, 2002